

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION APPROVES TWO NEW NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission has approved two new waterfowl refuges for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Humboldt Bay, in northern California, and Lewis and Clark, at the mouth of the Columbia River. The approval to purchase lands was announced today by Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton.

The Commission also approved the purchase of "fill-in" lands within the boundaries of Wolf Island Refuge in Georgia.

The new refuge at Humboldt Bay was proposed to preserve a part of the bay area vital to resting and feeding for black brant in their flight from the Yukon Delta to the Mexican Pacific coast. Other migratory birds use the bay, which is also vital to fishes and shellfish in the estuarine area. When acquired, the refuge would include 2,400 acres of islands purchased from private interests and 5,414 acres of Federal, State, and city lands. The refuge islands lie north and south of the city of Eureka, and will preserve not only marshes but the eelgrass so important for feeding waterfowl.

The Lewis and Clark Refuge in Clatsop County, Oregon, was proposed last year after a biological study that began in 1963. Over half of the islands and tidelands within the area are held by Federal, State, or county governments, with more than 3,000 acres in private ownership at present. The completed refuge would include about 8,100 acres used by whistling swans, Canada geese, other waterbirds including 50,000 ducks each spring, and eagles.

The Wolf Island Refuge addition totaled 3,680 acres of land which had been under lease from the Nature Conservancy. The Fish and Wildlife Service is acquiring this for less than the Conservancy's original cost. The refuge formerly contained 538 acres originally acquired for a lighthouse. Wolf Island lies on the Atlantic Ocean about 55 miles south of Savannah, Georgia.

The Commission passes on proposed land acquisitions from funds collected through the sale of duck stamps and advances authorized by the Congress against future duck stamp sales. Its members are Secretary Morton (chairman), Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin, Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe, Senator Henry Bellmon of Oklahoma, Senator Lee Metcalf of Montana, Representative Silvio Conte of Massachusetts, and Representative John Dingell of Michigan.

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